



King County

King County Executive Branch IT
Reorganization Project

Phase 2: Transition Planning

Deliverable 6:

KCIT Employee Survey

November 2008



Submitted by:

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INTRODUCTION

A Baseline

Planning for the implementation of the reorganization of information technology within the Executive Branch of King County is almost completed. Measurement of progress towards the Executive and Council Goals and expected benefits from the reorganization is a key part of the implementation. One measurement tool is the Employee Survey.

This first administration of the on-line survey is intended to provide a baseline measurement against which the results of future surveys, can be compared. The survey will be repeated every six months for the next year and then annually, first to measure progress during implementation and then to assure that progress is maintained.

It is important to understand that the purpose of the survey is not to generate new recommendations or strategies, but rather to measure progress being made due to the strategies and actions that KCIT is beginning to implement such as new structures, new accountabilities, the communication plan, and culture change workshops.

Survey Tied to Desired Results

The desired results of the reorganization were based on the Executive and Council Goals, and are described in Table 3 of the “Recommended Organization and Plan for Capacity Building and Transition” (March 2008). Four of these desired results relate directly to the ability of employees to be successful and satisfied in their jobs and the work environment and culture which supports them. The following table identifies the selected desired results and the concepts related to them that the survey is intended to measure:

Table 1
Desired Results and Concepts for Measurement

Selected Desired Result	Concepts to Measure
<i>Deliver responsive service to internal customers, the public, and other jurisdictions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Culture of responsiveness– Culture of clear, direct, timely, and respectful communication– Extent to which teams are used
<i>Facilitate information-sharing internally and externally.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Internal stakeholders are consulted about decisions and know how their input is used– Technical and best practice information is shared across the departments– There are good relationships between Central IT and the decentralized services
<i>Support a culture of effective governance, clear accountability, and communication.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– There is sense of shared accountability– People know how decisions are made

Selected Desired Result	Concepts to Measure
<i>Recruit, deploy, and retain an appropriately skilled workforce.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplace culture of OIRM - Career paths - Sense of staff that they belong to a single IT organization - Engagement of staff in problem solving, technical changes, and defining processes - Access to training

Methodology

The survey was designed by Strategic Learning Resources (SLR) and administered on-line by the KCIT Communications Program Manager. Rather than sending the survey through the online survey application, a link to the on-line survey was sent to IT employees by email. This approach assured that the responses of individuals were anonymous. Two reminder emails were sent to all IT employees to encourage a high response rate. The survey was opened on October 21st and closed on November 4th.

The results of the survey were downloaded by SLR and compiled and analyzed, using Excel. This report provides both the detailed tables downloaded directly from the survey application and the summary tables and analysis. The analysis and tables were designed to be easily replicated by KCIT in the future.

The survey tool, as seen on-line, is provided in Appendix A. It includes 25 statements to which employees were asked to indicate their level of agreement and four demographic questions which allowed the results to be organized by department, the length of time an employee had been with King County, whether they were management or staff, and whether they were represented. The survey was designed to take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Questions in the survey were intentionally designed to make analysis now and in the future relatively simple and easily comparable:

- respondents rated statements on a five point scale, with 5 being strongly in agreement, 3 being neutral, and 1 being strongly in disagreement.
- with the exception of one question, (related to looking for a job outside of King County), all statements describe a positive aspect. This allows one to compare the average rating for any question between segments of the respondents or between questions.

For example, within the group of respondents, an average rating of 3.2 would indicate that only few were in agreement, while a rating of 4.2 would indicate many more were in agreement with the statement.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Who Responded

The overall response rate to the survey was good, with 235 (or 45%) of the IT staff completing the survey. (252 started the survey, but as is typical, there was a drop off of participants after the first few questions.)

Departments

Departmental response rates varied considerably as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Response Rates by Department

	Number of Respondents	Number of IT Employees	Response Rate
Central IT	97	208	47%
DAJD	3	5	60%
DCHS	7	29	24%
DDES	9	15	60%
DES	13	39	33%
DPH	33	62	53%
DNRP	29	78	37%
DOT	19	82	23%

Of note is that 23 respondents (10%) completed the survey but did not indicate which department they worked in. These respondents were consistently, though not greatly, more negative in their responses than respondents as a whole.

Other Demographic Characteristics

A limited set of demographic data was collected about respondents to provide more in-depth information about what might influence employees' responses and to be able to better target improvements to strategies to support the desired results of the reorganization. The respondent distribution for length of time with King County, the number represented or not represented, and the number of manager/supervisors or staff level employees are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Question	Response Count	Response Percent
<i>I have been employed by King County for:</i>		
less than 2 years	33	15%
2-9 years	82	36%
over 9 years	105	46%
not sure	7	3%
	227	100%
<i>I am:</i>		
represented	168	74%
non-represented	49	22%
not sure	9	4%
	226	100%
<i>I am:</i>		
a manager or supervisor	41	18%
staff	171	76%
not sure	13	6%
	225	100%

Responses by Desired Results

The following looks at the responses by desired result. There are many different ways to ‘slice and dice’ the responses: by department, Central IT versus decentralized services, the length of time that an employee has been with King County, whether they are in a manager or staff position, or whether they are represented or not. The detailed results, organized in these various ways, are found in the Appendices. The key differences or similarities of the responses when looked at in these segments are called out in the following.

Deliver responsive service to internal customers, the public, and other jurisdictions

This set of survey questions identifies whether employees:

- experience trust in the workplace,
- can take action to resolve problems without many formal approvals,
- have the resources they need to provide excellent customer service,
- work as part of a team, and
- believe that customer needs are a top priority and that Senior IT management understands those needs.

Overall

If one looks at the responses as a whole for all employees, within this desired result, the average response is 3.2, just slightly above ‘neutral’. Some responses of note:

- 86% of all respondents work as a member of one or more teams.
- Only 49% said they agreed or strongly agreed that customer needs are a top priority for King County.

- An even smaller group, 26%, felt that Senior IT management understands customer's needs.¹

*Central IT vs.
Decentralized IT*

When one looks at the responses in more detail, one learns that employees in Central IT are more likely to disagree with statements related to responsive service than employees in the departments, even though neither group is very positive. Three questions stand out where the average ratings are quite different:

Table 4
Comparison of Central and Decentralized IT
Desired Result: Responsive Service

	Central IT Average	Decentralized Services Average
There is an atmosphere of trust in my workplace.	2.6	3.2
I can take action to resolve problems without the need for many formal approvals.	2.6	3.2
I have the resources I need to provide excellent customer service.	2.8	3.3

Within the departments, DDES stands out as having particularly positive responses to these three questions – with an average response of agreement between 4.2 – 4.4.

Of interest is that while employees in the departments were more in agreement that customer needs were a high priority, there was little difference in responses between Central IT and the departments about Senior IT management's understanding of customer needs.

*Variation by
Other Characteristics*

The length of time an employee has been with the County, and the type of position they have did not seem to influence the responses in this group of questions, with a two exceptions:

- non-represented staff were less in agreement than represented staff that they could take action to resolve problems without the need for formal approvals.
- the less time an employee has worked for the County, the more likely they are to agree that customer needs are a priority and that Senior Management understands the needs.

¹ Here, it is important to remember that this is a baseline survey, at the beginning of implementation of a reorganization. Some ITSDM's have pointed out that who is included in Senior IT management may be obscure to staff. Senior IT management is defined as the ITSDMs, Central IT senior managers, and the CIO.

*Facilitate
information-sharing
internally and
externally*

This set of survey questions identifies whether employees agree that:

- employee input is considered before important decisions or changes are made.
- senior management communicates well with the rest of the organization².
- information and knowledge are shared openly and frequently across King County IT.
- IT staff work cooperatively with each other throughout King County IT to meet customer needs.

Overall

If one looks at the responses as a whole, for this desired result, the average response is 2.7, meaning that most employees would not describe information sharing favorably. Overall:

- only 16% agreed or strongly agreed that information is shared openly and frequently across IT.
- only 21% felt that employee input was considered before important decisions were made, or that senior management communicated well.
- fewer than 1 out of 3 feel that IT staff work cooperatively with each other throughout King County IT to meet customer needs.

*Central IT vs.
Decentralized IT*

This pattern of response is true for both Central IT and the departments, though the level of disagreement with those statements is somewhat higher in Central IT. No department stands out as having truly positive responses in this area, though DDES employees have a somewhat higher level of agreement with the statements related to employee input and communication from senior management.

*Variation by Type
of Position*

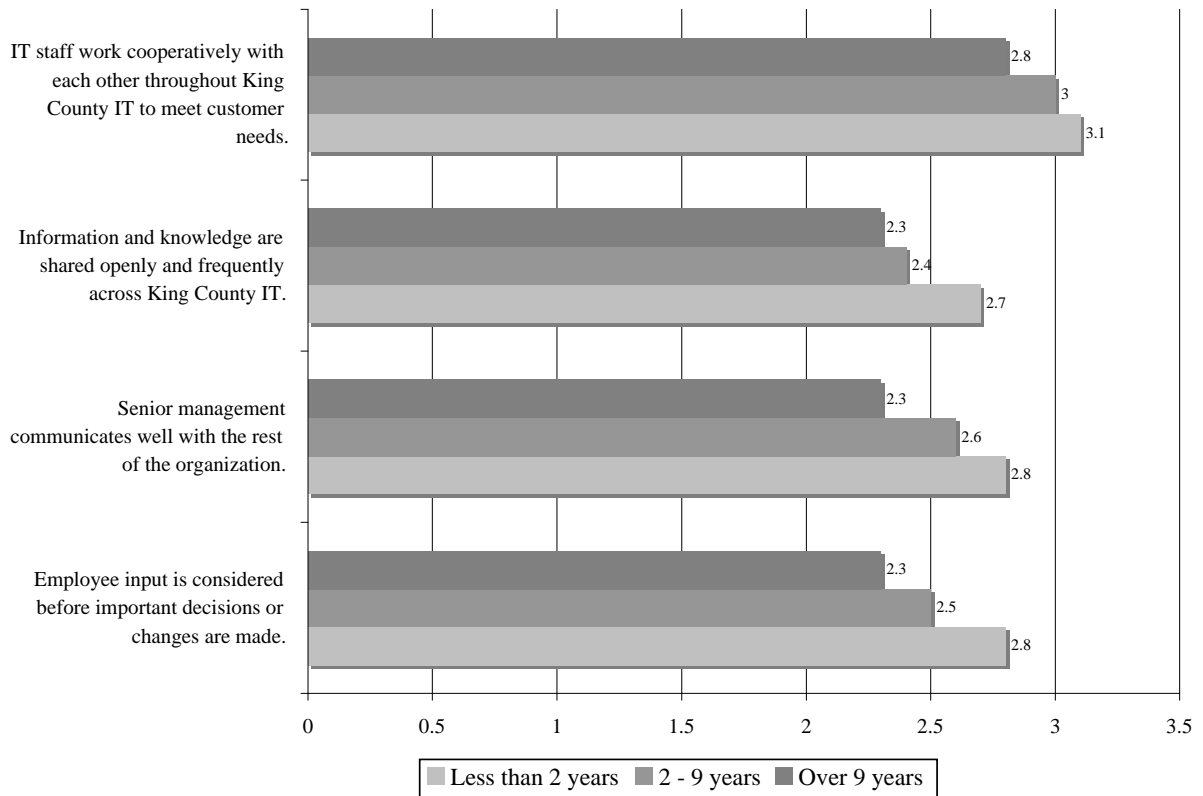
In general, represented and/or staff employees were less positive than non-represented and/or management employees about information sharing. This was particularly true for communication from senior management and information sharing across King County IT. The differences in respect to whether employee input is considered and whether IT staff worked cooperatively across King County were small.

*Variation by
Time Employed by
King County*

Interestingly, the length of time an employee has been employed by King County seems to influence their perception of the degree to which they have input or information. As shown in Figure 1, the shorter period of time they have worked for King County, the more likely they are to feel they have input, that senior management communicates, and that information is shared across King County IT.

² This question should be revised slightly in future surveys to read “Senior IT management “. The word IT was omitted and may have caused some confusion.

Figure 1
Average Response to Information Sharing Questions
By Length of Time Employed by King County



Support a culture of effective governance, clear accountability, and communication

This set of survey questions addresses whether employees agree:

- they are held accountable for achieving goals and meeting expectations,
- they are empowered and encouraged to solve problems on their own,
- they have the freedom and authority to make necessary decisions,
- they have a clear understanding of the goals and expectations of King County IT, and
- they have a clear understanding of the values and behavioral standards for King County IT.

Overall

If one looks at the responses within this desired result, the average response is 3.0. This is essentially a 'neutral' response and one must look at the detail to discern better how employees feel in this area.

Looking at the responses as a whole, some things are of note:

- 51% of all employees feel they are held accountable and almost the same number (47%) feel they are empowered to solve problems, but only slightly more than a third feel they have the freedom and authority to make decisions.
- Employees are divided in roughly thirds as to whether they understand the goals and expectations of King County IT, don't have an understanding, or are 'neutral'.

*Central IT vs.
Decentralized IT*

This is an arena where the responses of Central IT and IT employees within departments are quite different, as can be seen by the average ratings.

Table 5
Comparison of Central and Decentralized IT
Desired Result: Accountability and Communication

	Central IT Average	Decentralized Services Average
We are held accountable for achieving goals and meeting expectations.	2.8	3.5
Employees are empowered and encouraged to solve problems on their own.	2.8	3.3
Employees are given the freedom and authority they need to make necessary decisions.	2.4	3.1

Within the decentralized services, DDES employees are most likely to be in agreement with any of the questions in this group. DNRP and DOT employees also feel relatively accountable and empowered. DPH employees feel the least and have ratings similar to that of Central IT, except in the area of accountability where they are more likely to feel accountable.

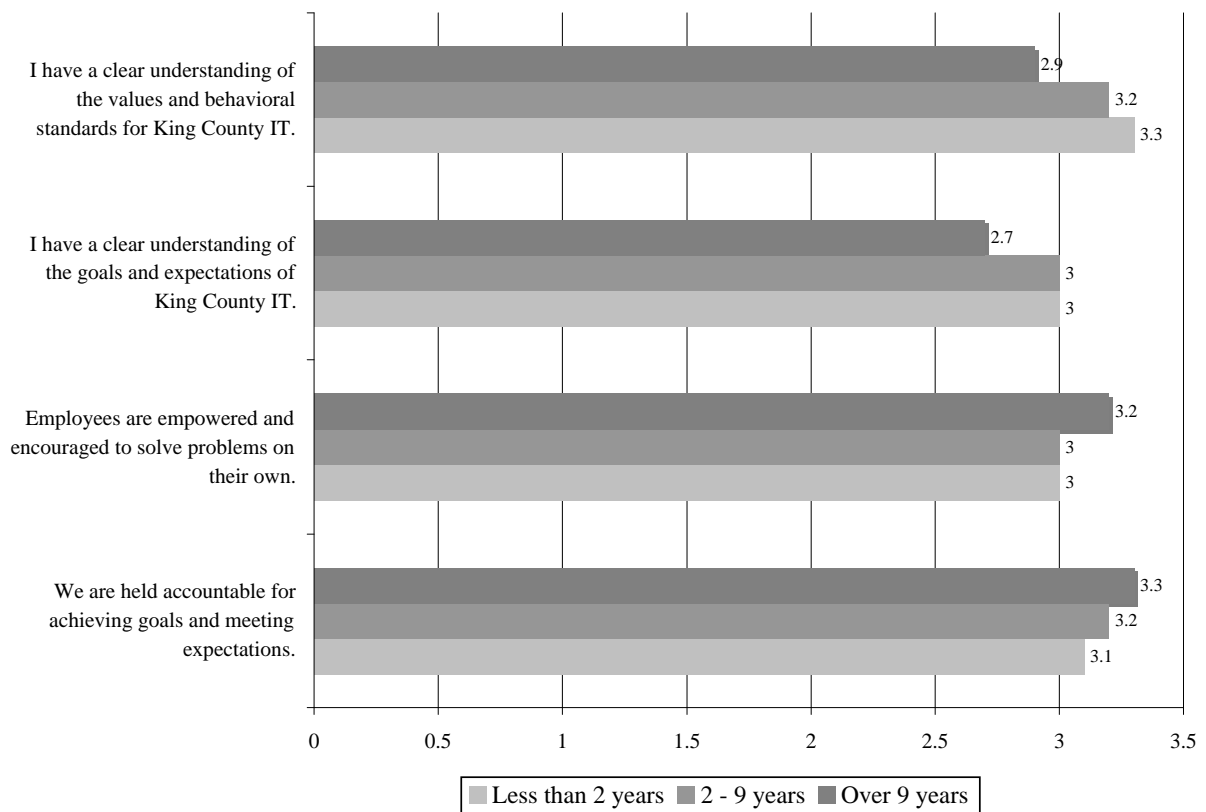
*Variation by Type
of Position*

There are only slight differences between managers/supervisors and staff (and represented and non-represented employees) in this arena, except for the question regarding clarity about goals and expectations – where managers and supervisors are more likely to agree that they have a clear understanding.

*Variation by
Time Employed by
King County*

Interestingly, employees who have worked for the County 10 years or more are more likely to feel accountable and empowered, but be less likely to have clear understanding of the goals, expectations, values, or behavioral standards of King County IT than employees who have been employed by the County for a shorter period of time.

Figure 2
Average Responses to Accountability & Culture Questions
By Length of Time Employed by King County



Recruit, deploy, and retain an appropriately skilled workforce

This set of survey questions addresses whether employees agree:

- they are satisfied with their job,
- the work they do makes a difference to King County,
- their talents and skills are valued at work,
- their job does not cause them stress or anxiety,
- the amount and scope of their work is reasonable,
- they feel like they are a part of the Office of King County Information Technology,
- the County retains its most talented IT employees,
- they know what to do to be successful in their position, and
- they feel supported in the area of professional development.

The survey also asked if respondents were actively looking for a job – a question where higher disagreement ratings are a more positive response indicating greater satisfaction.³

³ KCIT may wish to re-phrase this question in the follow-up surveys so that a positive response indicates satisfaction. This will make survey analysis a bit easier in the future.

Overall

Responses, rolled up for all questions, gave an average rating of 3.2 or slightly positive. Overall, there are specific areas where employees appear to be quite positive:

- 84% feel their work makes a difference to King County,
- 71% feel their talents and skills are valued,
- 62% are very satisfied with their job, and
- 57% believe they know what they need to do to be successful.

On the other hand:

- only 26% agreed that their job did not cause stress or anxiety,
- only 13% agreed that the County retains its most talented IT employees, and
- 16% are actively looking for a job outside of King County.

Central IT vs. Decentralized IT

For the most part, there are not large differences in responses by Central IT and the departments in this group of questions. Exceptions to this are shown in Table 6, in which Central IT employees tend to be less positive than those in departments. The notable, and not surprising, exception is that Central IT employees are much more likely to feel part of the overall IT organization.

Table 6
Comparison of Central and Decentralized IT
Desired Result: Recruitment and Retention

	Central IT Average	Decentralized Services Average
I am very satisfied with my job.	3.3	3.7
The work I do makes a difference to King County.	3.8	4.2
My talents and skills are valued at work.	3.5	3.8
I feel like I am a part of the Office of King County Information Technology.	3.3	2.3

Variation by Department

It is in the arena of this desired result that some of the greatest variation occurs between departments. Four of the questions, those dealing with general satisfaction, making a difference, feeling valued, and knowing what to do to be successful had general positive responses in all departments, though DAJD, DDES, and DNRP were markedly more positive than the other departments. DPH employees were much more likely to be actively looking for a job outside of King County (average response of 3.0) than DAJD and DDES, who were the least likely to be doing so (average responses of 1.3-1.6).

In respect to lack of stress or anxiety and having a reasonable workload, DDES employees have a more positive stance than other departments and DOT, DPH, and DAJD have the least positive.

In respect to feeling supported in professional development, there is again a large range of response, with DDES having an average rating of 4.1 and DPH a low of 2.2 and other departments falling in between. There is a similar, though less wide range related to agreement that King County retains talented IT employees – with DCHS employees being more in agreement with that statement (average of 3.0), and DPH being the least (average of 2.0).

*Variation by
Type of Position*

Employees who identified themselves as non-represented employees and/or holding a manager/supervisor position differed from represented and staff level employees significantly in respect to one group of questions, where they tended to have a much more positive outlook as shown in Table 7. In respect to other questions in the arena of staff recruitment and retention, there were only small differences between these two groups.

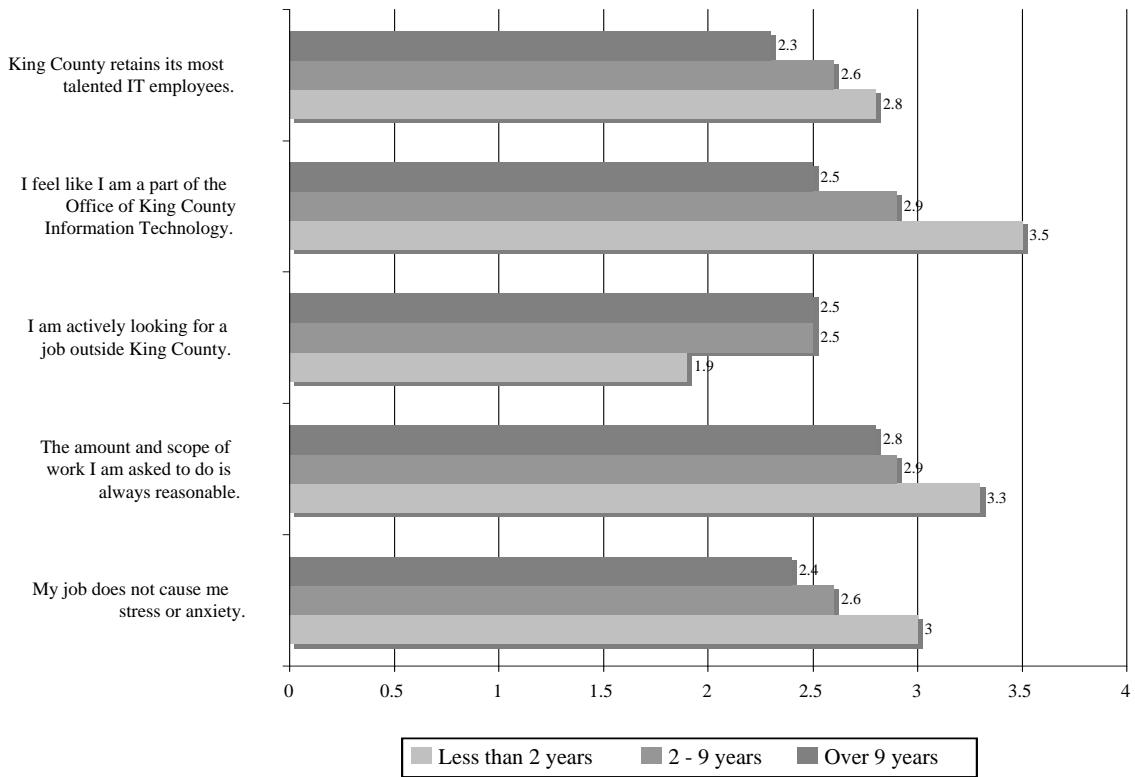
Table 7
Comparison of Represented and Non-Represented IT Staff
Desired Result: Recruitment and Retention

	Represented Staff Average	Non-Represented Staff Average
I am actively looking for a job outside of King County.	2.5	1.9
I feel like I am a part of the Office of King County Information Technology.	2.6	3.5
The County retains its most talented IT employees.	2.4	2.8
I know what I need to do to be successful in my position in King County IT.	3.3	3.8
I feel supported in my professional development.	2.8	3.4

*Variation by
Time Employed by
King County*

As with many other parts of the survey, length of time with the County influences employee perspectives. The greatest differences, where longer term employees are less satisfied, are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Comparison by Length of Time Employed by King County
Desired Result: Recruitment and Retention



NEXT STEPS

The results of the employee survey will be discussed by the various stakeholders in a successful implementation of the new structure and culture of King County IT in the Executive Branch including labor, management, and each department. Understanding better where the starting point is for implementation will allow each department to fine tune its implementation strategies. The survey will be repeated in April and October of 2009 to assess the progress towards the four desired results, which the survey is designed to monitor.